

Annual Examination

Orientation Guide



Edward Hines Jr. VA Hospital

Hines, Illinois 60141-5128

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Welcome to Your Annual Examination at the Hines SCI Outpatient Clinic



The Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Staff welcome you to Hines for your Annual Exam. A typical examination is completed within one day. During your exam we will:

- Conduct the assessments appropriate for your condition
- Schedule the required lab, radiology and other tests
- Arrange for you to meet with each clinical specialty relevant to your care

This booklet contains a great deal of information useful for SCI patients. It may be relevant for you now, or be useful as a future reference. Your time here will be very busy and informative, and is dedicated to optimizing the health of our most important team member –You, the Veteran!

The Importance of Your Annual Exam

The SCI Comprehensive Preventive Health Evaluation is also called the Annual Exam. The exam focuses on the prevention or early identification of complications related to SCI. It should be performed at an SCI Center. The SCI exam is very thorough. It may also include preventive health care tests and screening recommended for the general Veteran population. Annual Exams may include:

- Psychological assessments
- Social review
- Vocational assessment including rehabilitation potential and readiness
- Social role participation
- Assessments covering sexuality, quality of life, behavioral and mental health status, chemical dependency and/or use
- Living environment
- Attendant training needs

Components of Your Annual Exam

Reception and Registration

The table describes the time line for scheduling your Annual Exam appointment.

TIME PRIOR TO YOUR VISIT	ACTIVITY
One Year	When you complete each yearly visit, an appointment reminder date will be placed in the computer system for the next year.
One Month	SCI schedules an appointment for you in the computer system. The appointment is scheduled for 90 minutes.
Three Weeks	Scheduling department mails you a letter with your specific appointment date and time.
Two Weeks	SCI mails you a letter explaining the Annual Exam process and how to prepare for any tests.
One Week	SCI contacts you by phone to confirm your appointment date and time and answer any questions you may have regarding the exam and preparation for lab tests.

When you arrive in the SCI Clinic the receptionist will verify your address and other information and ask questions about the annual evaluation forms. She will

also provide a physical therapy screening questionnaire. This determines if you will need to see the Physical Therapist during your visit.

Nurse Assessment and Interview

You will meet with the Registered Nurse to discuss your current health status and any concerns you have. The nurse will take your vital signs – temperature, pulse, respiration, and blood pressure. She will assist you to a scale and record your weight, or use the scale within the overhead-lift to check your weight. The nurse will review your current medicines, supplies and immunizations. If medicine or supply renewals are required, the nurse will begin the reordering process.

During the annual exam you will have an EKG done. You will be asked to fast (not eat anything for 14 hours) for blood work to be drawn in the clinic. We test your electrolytes, lipids, cholesterol, glucose, liver profile, blood count to check hemoglobin, and white count to check for infection. Males under 75 years old may have a Prostatic Specific Antigen (PSA) blood test drawn to check for prostate cancer. There is a urine test to check for a urinary tract infection. You will be given a large plastic lab container to collect urine over a 24 hour period. This checks for calcium, protein, and creatinine in your urine. An ultrasound of the kidneys is done to check for kidney stones or other problems. You will be asked to undress and change into a hospital gown to have a head to toe physical assessment conducted by the provider in the clinic.

If you have a wound, it will be checked and measured. Wound care orders will be carried out or reassessed to see if they are working effectively. If the provider feels that you may need to see a specialist, the doctor will order a consult. You will also have visits from the Physical Therapist if needed, and the Social Worker, Dietitian, and Psychologist. If there is a problem with any of your present equipment, (wheelchair, cane, walker, bed etc.), we will take care of it. If you have diabetes, and have not had your eyes checked within the year, you may be scheduled for an appointment with your eye doctor. Each year you may also be screened for tuberculosis (TB). This TB test is performed with a small “shot” in your forearm.

Physical Exam

The VHA Handbook 1176.1 lists what is required for your “Annual Comprehensive Preventive Health Evaluation”. The physical exam will be done by an SCI Nurse Practitioner and / or a Spinal Cord Medicine Board Certified Physician.

SCI Comprehensive Preventive Health Exam

Critical functions of SCI care include:

- Health promotion
- Prevention of complications
- Early identification of problems
- Treatment of complications related to lifestyle, aging, and living with a SCI

Annual health exams must be offered at SCI Centers by health team associates trained in SCI care. The SCI specific Exam includes items in the table. Your provider will determine which components are appropriate for you.

EXAM COMPONENT	COMPLETED
Medical History and Physical Exam <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Allergiesb. Medicinesc. Skin (Integumentary)d. Heart (Cardiovascular)e. Lungs (Pulmonary)f. Abdomen (Gastrointestinal)g. Diabetes / Thyroid (Endocrine)h. Bladder (Genitourinary)i. Musculoskeletalj. Neurologic systems	
Skin Checking for Pressure Ulcers <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Assessment of risk factorsb. Review of prevention strategiesc. Checking skin	
Heart Cardiovascular Screening <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Blood Pressureb. Blood Test for Cholesterol (Lipoprotein) every 5 yearsc. EKG (Electrocardiogram)	

Lungs Respiratory Complications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pulmonary function test b. Chest X-ray c. Possible sleep study 	
Immunization Annual influenza vaccine is recommended for all persons with SCI, unless there are specific contraindications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Annual influenza vaccine b. Pneumococcal vaccine 	
Abdomen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Gall bladder disorders b. Imaging abdominal ultrasound c. Computed tomography (CT) d. Annual rectal exam 	
Diabetes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Endocrine b. Blood Test c. Annual eval of serum glucose 	
Urinary System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Annual urine exam including culture b. Blood test for serum creatinine and BUN c. Ultrasound or CT Kidneys and Bladder d. Cystoscopy as indicated e. PSA testing f. Urodynamic eval 	
Musculoskeletal There may be problems with muscles and joints of upper limbs in people with SCI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Exam of muscles and joints b. Education on prevention of problems c. Laboratory and imaging studies 	
Autonomic Dysreflexia Evaluation and education	
The Evaluation of Spine Pain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Thorough history, physical exam b. Imaging studies 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Neuro exam d. ASIA neurological assessment classification 	
<p>Bone Assessment</p> <p>There may be problems with decreased bone mineral content and bone mineral density in persons with SCI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Check for osteoporosis b. Fall prevention education should be reviewed c. Seating and posture eval by PT d. Rehab functional assessment to include Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) 	
Review of Medicines and Supplies	
Review of Prosthetic Equipment Needs, Function and Safety	
<p>Additional Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Psychological b. Dietary and Nutritional c. Social d. Dental Exam e. Vocational screening for service needs related to vocational rehabilitation potential and/or readiness f. Social role participation g. Sexuality h. Quality of life i. Behavioral health status j. Chemical dependency and/or use k. Living environment l. Attendant training needs 	
<p>Results</p> <p>The comprehensive preventive health exam findings are summarized with recommendations for follow-up care and these are shared with the patient</p>	
<p>Multiple Sclerosis (MS)</p> <p>MS related assessments, if applicable</p>	

Physical Therapy

You will be asked to complete a survey form inquiring if in the past three months you have experienced a decrease in your ability to:

1. Walk
2. Transfer
3. Propel a wheelchair

If the answer is yes to any of these questions, this will trigger a visit by one of the SCI Physical Therapists. The decrease in function will be discussed with you to determine the need for Physical Therapy, wheelchair replacement or adaptive equipment.

Occupational Therapy

The Occupational Therapist will look at any functional decline in the last three months for:

1. Feeding
2. Grooming
3. Dressing
4. Toileting
5. Bathing
6. Any orthotic devices or adaptive equipment that you may need

This is accomplished by an interview with you. If needed, a consult will be scheduled. It is also an opportunity for you to discuss your questions with the therapist.

Nutrition Interview and Assessment

You will meet with the Registered Dietitian to discuss your current eating patterns, identify any nutrition related problems, and explore approaches to improve your nutritional status. Nutrition is vital in both wound care and in the prevention of wounds. Good nutrition is needed to prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. Good nutrition can improve quality of life overall.

Assessments by the Registered Dietitian will include:

1. Monitor for chewing/swallowing issues
2. Weight loss
3. Tube feeding tolerance
4. Poor appetite or intake
5. Diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting
6. Educational needs such as: diabetic diet guidelines, high protein diet, low cholesterol diet, etc.

If a nutrition problem is identified then you may receive dietary education or the Registered Dietitian may schedule you for an outpatient appointment.

Psychology Assessment

SCI Psychology Service will evaluate all Veterans being seen in the outpatient clinic during their annual exam. A psychologist assigned to SCI will meet with you to see how you have been doing over the past year. The psychologist will discuss mood, substance use/abuse and adjustment to living with a disability. If you need or want additional mental health services you will be scheduled to meet with one of the SCI psychologists or will be referred to a mental health specialty clinic (e.g., Trauma Services, Addiction Treatment Program).

Social Work Assessment

You will have the opportunity to meet with a Spinal Cord Social Worker during their annual exam. The Social Worker will evaluate your caregiver support system, and assess the need for any new services, or changes in current services. Social Workers may also provide community resources based on your specific needs. They are available to discuss issues on an individual level, and will assist you with problem solving, or tasks of daily living. Advanced Directive counseling or documentation may also be completed during your annual visit.

Equipment Evaluation

If you are experiencing any difficulties with your adaptive equipment (wheelchair, walker, and transfer devices) this should be discussed with your provider. An assessment of your use of the device will be scheduled.

Immunization Schedule

A regular review of your current immunization status is an important part of your annual exam. The provider will check your immunization history with the Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule developed annually by the CDC (Center for Disease Control). Your medical record will be reviewed to determine when you last had a tetanus immunization. You may receive a tetanus immunization if needed. Two other vaccines that will be reviewed are the seasonal “Flu” shot and the Pneumonia shot.

Seasonal Flu

Influenza (“flu”) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. Each year a flu vaccine (flu shot or nasal spray) is made that works well to stop the spread of seasonal flu. Getting vaccinated each year is the best way to protect yourself from seasonal flu. VA encourages all eligible Veterans to get vaccinated for seasonal flu at their local VA health care facility each year. Seasonal flu vaccinations are usually available each year, from October through February.

The Pneumonia Shot

Pneumonia shots save lives by protecting against **pneumococcal disease**.

Pneumococcal disease is more than just **pneumonia**. It is a very serious illness. It can cause infection in your bloodstream and in the lining of your brain.

Anyone can get **pneumococcal disease**. Adults over the age of 65 are at greater risk for complications. Everyone who is 65 or older should get a **pneumonia** shot. SCI patients are encouraged to have the Pneumonia shot regardless of their age.

If you are younger than 65, you should get a **pneumonia** shot if you:

- Have chronic heart disease, lung disease, liver disease, kidney disease or diabetes
- Have sickle cell disease
- Have certain cancers such as Hodgkin's disease, lymphoma, leukemia or multiple myeloma
- Have had your spleen removed
- Have a weakened immune system, caused by cancer, medicines, HIV, or AIDS
- Are an Alaskan Native or Native American
- Live in a nursing home or other care facility

Most people receive the **pneumonia** shot when they reach 65. If you had a **pneumonia** shot before you turned 65, and got the shot more than 5 years ago, you will need a 'booster' shot. After the shot, your skin may be red or sore where the needle went in. Ask your health care team if you need a pneumonia shot.

A resource regarding immunization is: VA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Office of Patient Care Services www.prevention.va.gov

Providers You Will Meet

The SCI Team is composed of multiple disciplines and several individuals within each role. You will be meeting one provider from each discipline.

AREA	INDIVIDUAL	PHONE
Receptionist	Sharon Moltane	708-202-2017
Nurses	Barbara LaVant Lora Coffelt	708-202-8387 ext. 24115 708-202-2017
Nurse Practitioner	Mavis Diaz-Caturan	708-202-4148
Physicians	Michael Richardson, Chief Babu Eladasari Zeba Iqbal Muhammed S. Khan Shamsi Lashgari-Saegh Robbie Logan Ramadevi Parachuri Mohammed Siddiqui	708-202-2241
Physical Therapists	Paul Ellin Shobha Patil	708-202-2168 708-202-2168
Occupational Therapist	Joe Jelinek	708-202-2168
Registered Dietitian	D'arcy Rea	708-202-8387 ext. 21575
Psychologists	Jeff Canar Caroline Hawk Laurie Schmitt	708-202-7415 708-202-3994 708-202-8387 ext. 24257
Social Workers	Lucia Barrera Allyson Morch Todd Mayer	708-202-2086 708-202-2106 708-202-2082

Follow-Up Activities

The results of your tests will be provided to you by either:

- Letter mailed to you (blank form copy attached)
- Phone call from your doctor

Scheduling Next Year's Annual Exam

At check out, the receptionist will ask you to fill out a survey of the visit. We want to know how satisfied you were with your experience at Hines. The receptionist will also schedule your annual exam for the next year. The information regarding your next appointment is then updated in the SCI Registry.



The SCI Outpatient Administrative and Nursing Team Welcome You!

Hines VA Spinal Cord Injury Service
Hines VA Medical Center
Hines, IL. 60141
708-202-2241

«FNAME» «LNAME»
«ADDRESS1»
«CITY», «ST». «ZIP»
«PHONE»

3/17/2010

Dear «fname» «lname»,

I would like to take a moment to thank you for receiving your Annual Evaluation today. As you know, an Annual Examination is an important part of your health care and we are happy to serve you.

Based on the results of the annual examination:

- ☐ The results of your Annual Examination were fine and no follow-up is needed at this time.
- ☐ Please contact me at 708-202-2241 to discuss the results of your Annual Examination.

If you ever have any questions about your health care, feel free to contact us at 708-202-2241.

Sincerely,

